

NOAH'S CARPENTERS.

It was a late hour at night. . The city of N—— with its many turrets and spires were sleeping under the shadow of those rocky sentinels which have guarded the plain since the flood. The waves of the ocean fell gently and soothingly on the beach.— The moon waded through the fleecy autumn clouds, now playing with the waters and lighting up the scene, and then concealing her glory as if to make its revelations more prized. It was a night for pious thought and conversation.

Two persons were leaving the city and passing along the water-side to a beautiful villa, where one was a resident and the other a guest. The taller and elder of the two was actively engaged in a work of benevolence, in the blessings of which the people of N—— and the students of —— college mutually shared. The work was "too heavy" for him, and he had invited his young friend, an impenitent lad, of whom we shall speak as Henry, to aid him. Together they had spent many a weary day in supplying the Christian laborers who co-

operated with them, with the choicest means of usefulness, as they crowded the depository of truth. Exhausted by their toils, they were now returning for a night's repose. Hitherto not a word had been addressed to the obliging lad about his soul. The fitting occasion seemed to have arrived. A quaint, but fitting manner was chosen.

"Henry," asked the elder of the younger, "do you know what became of *Noah's carpenters*?"

"Noah's carpenters!" exclaimed Henry; "I did not know that Noah had any carpenters."

"Certainly he must have had help in building one of the largest and best proportioned ships ever put on the stocks. There must have been many ship carpenters at work for a long time, to have constructed such a vessel in such an age. What became of them, think you, when all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened?"

"What do you mean by such a queer question?" Henry replied.

"No matter what, just now. Please answer the inquiry. And you may also tell me, if you will, what *you* would have done in that dreadful hour, when the storm came in its fury, and Noah's prophecies were all

fulfilled, and all but the family of the preacher of righteousness were ready to be engulfed in those black waters?"

"I don't know," said Henry, in a half-thoughtful, half-trifling manner; "but I think I should have got on the rudder."

"That is human nature exactly, Henry. It would 'climb' up some other way,' rather than enter the fold by the only door. It would 'get on the rudder,' in its pride and short-sightedness, rather than go into the ark of safety. It would *save itself* by hanging on, at the hazard of being swept into the gulf of despair, instead of *being saved* by the provision of infinite love.

"But I'll tell you plainly what I mean, Henry, by Noah's carpenters. You have kindly and generously given me your aid, day after day, in building an ark in N——, by which many, I trust, will be saved. I feel grateful for your help. But I greatly fear, that while others will be rejoicing in the fruits of our labors, you will be swept away in the storm of wrath which will by and by beat on the heads of those who enter not the ark of Jesus. No human device will avail for you. 'Getting on the rudder' will not answer; you must be in Christ, or you are lost. Remember Noah's carpenters, and flee to the ark without delay."

We reached the house and parted. The winter came. The lad was placed at a boarding school in ——. He visited his home during the winter vacation, and presented himself to the church for admission to its communion. He then stated that the conversation detailed above had never passed from his memory.

Though Noah's carpenters were all drowned, there are a great many of the same stock now alive—those who contribute to promote the spiritual good of others, and aid in the up-building of the Redeemer's kingdom, but personally neglect the great salvation.

Sabbath-school children who gather in the poor, or contribute their money to send libraries or tracts and books to the West, or to aid the work of missions, and yet remain unconverted, are like Noah's carpenters.

Teachers in Bible-classes and Sabbath-schools who point their pupils to the Lamb of God, but do not lead the way, are like guide-boards that tell the road, but are not travelers on it; or like Noah's carpenters, who built an ark, and were overwhelmed in the waters that bore it aloft in safety.

Christless parents who instruct their children and servants, as every parent should, in the great doctrines of the gospel, yet

fail to illustrate these doctrines in their lives, and seek not a personal interest in the blood of Christ, are like Noah's carpenters, and must expect their doom.

Printers, folders, sewers and binders engaged in making Bibles and religious books, booksellers and hawkers, and publishers of religious newspapers, who are doing much to increase the knowledge of the gospel and to save souls, but so many of whom are careless about their own salvation, will have the mortification of knowing, that while their toils have been instrumental of spiritual good to thousands, they were only like the pack-mules that carried a load to market without tasting it; or like Noah's carpenters, who built a ship they never sailed.

Wealthy and liberal, but unconverted men who help to build churches and sustain the institutions of the gospel, but who "will not come unto Christ, that they may have life," are hewing the timbers and driving the nails of the ark they are too proud or too careless to enter. Perhaps they think they will be safe on the "rudder;" but they may find too late, that when they would ride they must swim—that when they would float they must sink, with all their

good deeds, unmingled with faith, as a millstone about their necks.

Moralists who attend church and support the ministry, but who do not receive into their hearts the gospel they thus sustain, are like Noah's carpenters.

Professed ministers of the gospel who preach the truth without practicing it, who commend the love of Christ without experiencing it, who guide the wandering to the fold of Christ without entering it themselves—are they not like Noah's carpenters? If Paul might indulge the apprehension lest, when he had "preached to others," he should himself "be a cast away," may not those of us who follow at a sad distance from Paul in the Christian race, well see to it that we are not left to buffet the waves of an overwhelmed world, when some of those we have led into the ark are borne triumphantly above the billows in which we are engulfed?

Perhaps the Christian reader will be encouraged by this narrative to speak a word in season to some of these ark-builders. They are numerous. Their kindness should be acknowledged. "These things ought they to have done." The danger is, that *the great thing* will be "left undone." "Run, speak to that young man. Tell him that

the storm of wrath will come. Tell him that "getting on the rudder" of the ark, and all other human devices for salvation are vain refuges of lies. Tell him that the ark is open; that it is safe; that it waits for him. The dove and the olive branch are in this ark. The bow of mercy spans the heavens above it. Peace and hope and salvation are there. But, if scorned or neglected, when once the door is shut, they only that are "in the ark" will "remain alive." Who can abide that storm? Who can buffet those waves? Who will survive that deluge.

Heber.

DELAY IN RELIGION.

An accurate examination into the periods of life at which those whose lives of godliness give evidence of true religion, first began to be followers of Christ, furnishes an amazing demonstration of the folly and danger of delay. The probability of conversion diminishes as rapidly as years roll on.

Make up a congregation of a thousand Christians. Divide them into five classes, according to the ages at which they became Christians. Place in the first class all those converted under 20 years of age; second class, all those converted between 20 and 30; third class, all those converted between 30 and 40; fourth class, all those converted between 40 and 50; fifth class, all those converted between 50 and 60. Then count each of the five

classes separately. Of your thousand Christians, there were hopefully converted, under 20 years of age, 548; between 20 and 30 years of age, 337; between 30 and 40, 86; between 40 and 50, 11; between 50 and 60, 3—between 60 and 70, 1.

Just one out of a thousand Christians converted over sixty years old. What a lesson on delay—what an awful lesson! What an appeal is this to the unconverted of every age. To such as are still in the favored season of early youth, it says, *Now is the accepted time. Seek early.* Those who have passed even the early age of *twenty*, have demonstrated to them the fact that the *most favorable* season is gone already, and that the grounds of hope in their case are rapidly growing narrow and more insecure, with every additional day of impenitence, to their closing hour.

Need we add a word on the solemnity with which such considerations appeal to ministers of the gospel on behalf of the young among their hearers—and to all Christian fathers and mothers—to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, on behalf of the impenitent in their families and around them?

Dr. Spencer.

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